DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 995 CG 014 208

AUTHOR Barber, Clifton E.
TITLE The Influence of Perceived Power and Dependency on Role-Taking Accuracy in Three Generational Families.
INSTITUTION Colorado State Univ., Ft. Collins.
SPONS AGENCY Brigham Young Univ., Provo, Utah.
PUB DATE 25 Nov 79
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society (32nd, Washington, DC, November 25-29, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Patterns; *Extended Family; Family Structure; Females; Generation Gap; *Perception; *Perspective Taking; *Power Structure; Predictor Variables; Role Conflict; *Sex Differences

ABSTRACT

Research on nuclear families has reported support for an hypothesized inverse relationship between power and role-taking accuracy. Family members who are in subordinate (dependent) power positions are better able to predict attitudes and behavior of other family members than are those in relatively more powerful and independent positions. This hypothesis was tested within the context of the extended family and was seen as a significant shift in focus, given the alleged role reversal between adult children and their parents during the latter part of the family life cycle. Six persons representing three generations in each of 47 extended family units responded to a mailed questionnaire. Findings provided only equivocal support for the hypothesis. Support was found when the independent variable was operationalized in terms of perceived power or perceived physical dependency and in family dyads where the role-taker was a female sibling, a father, a mother, or a grandmother. For dyads where the role-taker was a male sibling or a grandfather, the relationship between power and role-taking accuracy was opposite that hypothesized. (Although data on which this study is based was obtained in 1972, the topic is of high current interest). (Author/HLM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED183995

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED POWER AND DEPENDENCY ON ROLE-TAKING ACCURACY IN THREE GENERATIONAL FAMILIES

Clifton E. Barber, Ph.D.
Department of Human Development and Family Studies
Colorado State University

ABSTRACT

Research on nuclear families has reported support for an hypothesized inverse relationship between power and role-taking accuracy. Family members who are in subordinate (dependent) power positions are better able to predict attitudes and behavior of other family members than are those in relatively more powerful and independent positions. The present study tested this hypothesis within the context of the extended family. This is seen as a significant shift in focus given the alleged role reversal between adult children and their parents during the latter part of the family life cycle. Six persons representing three generations in each of 47 extended family units responded to a mailed questionnaire. Findings provided only equivocal support for the hypothesis. Support was found when the independent variable was operationalized in terms of perceived power or perceived physical dependency. Some support for the hypothesis was found in family dyads where the role-taker was a female sibling, a father, a mother, or a grandmother. For dyads where the role-taker was a male sibling or a grandfather, the relationship between power and role-taking accuracy was opposite that hypothesized.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Clifton E. Barber

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG 014208

Funding for this study was provided by the Family Research Center, Department of Child Development and Family Relations, Brigham Young University.

Presented at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society, Washington, D.C., November 25-29, 1979.

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED POWER AND DEPENDENCY ON ROLE-TAKING ACCURACY IN THREE GENERATIONAL FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

Role-taking is a process whereby an individual momentarily steps outside himself and into the perceptual "shoes" of another. Role-taking operates almost automatically at times, commonly at nonverbal and sometimes unconscious levels, but always with varying degrees of accuracy. This research seeks to answer the question of why, though all human beings employ the process of role-taking, some are more adept at interpersonal perception than others; and why it might be possible for the same individual to be an accurate role-taker in one situation, but not in another.

Determinants of role-taking accuracy have been the substantive foci of much social research (Dymond, 1949; Flavell, 1968; Garfinkel, 1964; Hogan, 1969; Icheiser, 1955; Laing, Phillipson, and Lee, 1966; Stark, 1970; Stotland and Dunn, 1963; Stotland and Walsh, 1969). In spite of such attention, however, there has been a general failure to account for differences in an individual's ability to accurately take the role(s) of others. Calonico and Thomas (1973) have suggested that this may be because the majority of empirical investigations have been carried out by more psychologically-oriented researchers who, for the most part, have chosen to use the concept of "empathy" in instances where the more socially-oriented researcher would prefer the concept, "role-taking". The result has been a greater emphasis on the psychological, intrapersonal, and emotive aspects of the phenomenon rather than the more social, interpersonal or situational aspects.

CG 014208

What types of social or situational factors might influence role-taking accuracy? A clue is found in Mead's (1934) early observation that

> "What goes on in the game goes on in the life of the child all the time. He is continually taking the attitudes of those about him, especially the roles of those who in some way control him and on whom he depends" (p. 160; underlining added for emphasis).

This study investigates the influence of power and dependency on role-taking accuracy. The general proposition addressed is that persons in perceived subordinate power or dependent positions are more accurate role-takers than are those in perceived superordinate power or independent positions. One of the underlying assumptions in this study is that the proposed inverse relationship between power and role-taking accuracy is characteristic of any primary group where the members thereof must take the roles of one another if sustained, cooperative interaction is to occur. The extended family, with its alleged role reversals and disparities in power-dependency relations (Blenkner, 1965; Hill, 1970; Litwak, 1965; Scott, 1960, 1962; Sussman, 1965; Sussman and Burchinal, 1962), represents an important setting in which to test this proposition.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

Role-taking

The importance of role-taking for the present study lies primarily in its reflexive dimension. When an individual takes the role of another, he does so for the purpose of looking back upon himself as an object in the perceptual field of the other. Thus, role-taking is employed by man to reflect upon himself from the perspective of others.

According to symbolic interaction theory (Mead, 1934), the reflexive nature of role-taking is the very heart of the development of a person's feelings of self as well as the realization that he belongs to society.

Out of the process of role-taking emerges the feeling of a social identity (the "me") as an object seen from the perspective of "significant others". Social control is attained as an individual uses the perspective of one or more significant others to monitor and guide his own behavior (Shibutani, 1961).

The Relationship Between Role-taking and Power/Dependency

On what basis can a relationship between reflexive role-taking and power be posted? To answer this question first requires a brief discussion of the conceptual definition of social power.

There seems to be general consensus that social power is partially a function of one person's potential for affecting behavioral or attitudinal change in another person (Smith, 1970). This potential is, in turn, a function of resources valued by Person (the role-taker) and mediated by Other (the one whose role is taken).

Integrating the ideas of several social power theorists (French and Raven, 1959; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Emerson, 1962), Secord and Backman (1964) suggest that there are three determinants of social power: (a) Other's control over resources needed by Person; (b) Person's perceived dependency on these resources and (c) the availability to Person of alternative sources of the resources mediated by Other.

What is important to note in the Secord and Backman model is the emphasis that the power that Other is able to exercise over Person is conditional on Person's perceived dependence on Other. Resources mediated by Other are valuable only from the point of view of Person because he perceives that they fulfill his needs.

The relationship between role-taking and power/dependency now becomes apparent. If Person is dependent upon Other, and if this dependency is a

function of Person's perception that (a) resources he needs and values are mediated by Other, and that (b) his relationship with Other is the best available alternative means of obtaining these resources, then it becomes expedient for Person to be able to influence, at least to some degree, Other's behavior toward him. If Person behaves in some way so as to aggravate or displease Other, then Other may "cut off" resources that Person needs and values. If Person recognizes this latter possibility, then it becomes evident that he will place great importance on accurately taking Other's role; greater, in fact, than he would if he did not perceive himself to be dependent on Other. If Person is to ingratiate himself with Other (or at least avoid incurring Other's displeasure), then he must correctly identify, via the process of role-taking, Other's response(s) to some behavior that he, Person, anticipates performing.

This idea is illustrated in the case of minority groups in the larger societal structure. Rose (1969), using the term empathy instead of role-taking, states that

> "it may be that persons who are members of minority groups are forced, because of their underprivileged positions, to develop an empathetic ability as a condition of their adjustment to the subtle expression of dominance by members of superordinate groups. Thus, Negroes in minority situations have been characterized as having a more accurate perception of white mentality than whites have of Negro mentality" (p. 476).

Attempts by subordinates to please superordinates are also examples of one of the strategies of "balancing operations" described by Emerson (1962) which

> "increases the weaker member's power to control the formerly more powerful member through increasing the latter's motivational investment in the relation. This is normally accomplished through giving him status recognition in one . . . of its many forms, from ego gratifications to monetary differential. The ego rewards . . . are highly valued . . . while given at low cost to the giver (p. 39).

The Research Hypothesis and a Critique of Previous Research

The hypothesis tested in this study may be stated as follows:

> Given any dyadic relationship within a three generational family such that one member is designated as Person (the role-taker) and one as Other (the person whose role is taken), the perceived power position of Person in relation to Other will be inversely related to Person's ability to accurately take Other's role.[1]

Being derived as it is from symbolic interaction theory, this hypothesis emphasizes that role-taking is reflexive, that the power or dependence of the role-taker vis-à-vis the one whose role is being taken is the role-taker's perceived power or dependence, and that the relationship between role-taking and power is most relevant at the dyadic level of interpersonal relationships. Previous studies which have investigated the hypothesized inverse relationship between power and role-taking accuracy have found some support for the hypothesis (Brim, 1958; Ferrerra, 1964; Thomas et al., 1972) but by and large they have also suffered from three serious problems of fit between the perspective of symbolic interaction theory and the way in which they have operationalized theoretical concepts. First, in many of these studies, the power position of the role-taker is measured in terms of family position (e.g. father, mother, etc.) or age, not in terms of the role-taker's perceptual field. Second, role-taking is frequently assessed in a non-reflexive rather than a reflexive mode. And third, rarely has the hypothesis been tested at a dyadic level. In the present study, care has been taken to insure that these problems of "fit" are minimized.

Conceptual Definition of Variables

In this study, the primary dependent variable is role-taking accuracy. It is conceptualized in the reflexive mode and is measured as a continuous variable ranging from no accuracy to complete accuracy. Role-taking accuracy

is a function of the degree of fit or the extent of the difference between the role-taker's prediction of how the other will respond to some action (behavior) that he, the role-taker, initiates (or anticipates initiating) and the actual response of the other.

The independent variable is the perceived power of the role-taker relative to the power of the person whose role he is taking. It is a continuous variable ranging from low power (high dependency) to high power (low dependency). Conceptually, perceived power can be expressed in terms of (a) how the role-taker describes himself in comparison to the other on a relative power dimension, and (b) how dependent the role-taker perceives himself to be on the other.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Procedures

In 1972, a purposive sample of three thousand students was drawn representing the undergraduate student population of a large western university on three demographic variables: sex, age (18 to 21 years), and marital status (single). A short "postcard" questionnaire was mailed to these students in order to determine which of them were members of three generational families. Approximately 1,275 students returned the questionnaire, the results of which indicated that 160 students were members of families in which there were at least six persons representing three generations: the college student, a younger teenage brother or sister, the student's parents, and at least one set (maternal or paternal) of grandparents. From this list of eligible families, a sample of 65 was randomly drawn for inclusion in the study.

Administering the Instrument

Having obtained the names and addresses for family members from the college student, self-administered questionnaires were mailed to six members in each participating family. One packet was mailed to the student, one to his parents and younger sibling, and one to either his paternal or maternal grandparents. Each packet included a questionnaire, for each family member an instruction sheet and a cover letter explaining the purpose and importance of the study and offering assistance to the respondent should it be needed in completing the questionnaire. A stamped, return envelope was also included. Instructions requested that each family member complete his/her questionnaire without discussing it with other family members.

Respondent Characteristics

The final sample consisted of 47 three generational families in which all six members completed and returned questionnaires. The age range for the younger generation (college student and teenage sibling) was 13 to 21 years (mean=17.8); the parent generation age range was 33-60 years (mean=45.4); and the grandparent generation age range was 53-88 years (mean=70.2). There were 30 maternal grandparents and 17 paternal grandparents.

Operationalization and Scales

Reflexive role-taking accuracy (R-RAC) scale. The R-RAC scale was developed specifically for the present study. The scale is position-specific. That is, both the format of the scale and its content is different for each family position (e.g. college student; younger sibling, father, mother, grandfather and grandmother). This inherent attribute of the R-RAC scale limited its use in testing the research hypothesis to within specific family positions.

The scale is comprised of two sections. The first section contains two statements or situations that are position-specific. That is, for each family position, two hypothetical situations are presented in which the family member completing the scale--the role-taker--is portrayed as taking some specific action (making a decision or behaving in a particular fashion) that is hypothetically observed by other family members. The family member is then requested to indicate the degree to which each of the other five family members would either approve or disapprove of his/her action. The following is an illustration of one of these situations in the first section of the R-RAC scale on the father-position questionnaire:

1. Suppose that you, for various personal reasons, decide to leave your present job and obtain employment in another field. How likely would the following persons be to approve or disapprove of your decision to change jobs?

I predict this person would:	Definitely Disapprove	Probably Disapprove	Probably Approve	Definitely Approve
1. Husband/Wife	1	2	3	4
2. Son #1/Daughter #1	1	2	3	4
3. Son #2/Daughter #2	1	2	3	4
4. Father/Father-in-law	1	2	3	4
5. Mother/Mother-in-law	1	2	3	4

The second section of the R-RA€ scale for each family member is comprised of ten items which are reciprocal statements of those appearing in the first section of the scale for each of the other family members. The following is an example of an item appearing on a son's questionnaire which is a reciprocal statement to the situation illustrated above:

	I would Definitely Disapprove	I would Probably Disapprove	I would Probably Approve	I would Definitely Approve
3. Suppose that your father decides, for various reasons, to leave his present job and obtain employment in another field. How likely would YOU be to approve or disapprove of his decision to change jobs?	1	2	3	4

A role-taking accuracy score is obtained for each of the five dyads in which a family member is a role-taker by computing the difference between the family member's prediction of another's response and the actual response of the other on both hypothetical situations. For example, the role-taking accuracy score for a father in a father-son dyad is computed by determining the extent of the difference between his predictions of his son's responses to each of the two situations and the actual responses of the son, and then adding the absolute difference scores for each of the two situations. If a father predicts that his son would "probably approve" of a hypothetical situation action that he, the father, might take but the son actually indicates that he would "definitely disapprove" of the action, then the father's accuracy score for that situation would be 2. If the same pattern of prediction and actual response were repeated for the second situation, the father would receive a role-taking accuracy score of 4 for the father-son dyad across both role-taking situations.

The range of absolute difference scores for each family dyad is from zero (complete accuracy) to six (complete inaccuracy); the higher scores denoting greater role-taking inaccuracy. In the data analysis, however, role-taking accuracy scores were re-coded so that higher scores were indicative of greater role-taking accuracy.

Comparative self-description (CSD) scale. A Comparative self-description scale was developed to measure the perceived power of the role-taker relative to that of the person whose role he takes. The CSD scale is a modified and adapted version of an instrument used by Thomas, et al. (1974) in measuring self-esteem.[2] The CSD scale employs the semantic differential technique developed by Osgood (1962, 1964) and consists of eleven adjective pairs, each pair set on a five-point Likert-type scale. Family members are requested to describe themselves on a set of these eleven adjective pairs in comparison to each of five other family members. The following is an example of the section of the son's CSD scale in which he is requested to describe himself in comparison to his father.

1. Describe yourself compared to your FATHER.

Less Powerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Powerful
Less Wise	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Wise
Less Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Attractive
Less Confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Confident
Less Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Intelligent
Less Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Independent
Weaker	1	2	3	4	5	6	Stronger
Less Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Helpful
Less Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Honest
Less Dependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	More Dependable
Worse	1	2	3	4	5	6	Better

Since a factor analysis of the self-esteem scale used by Thomas, et al. (1974) revealed that their scale measured a power and a worth component of self-esteem, it was hoped that a similar scale adapted for use in comparative

self-descriptions among family members would also measure a perceived power factor. Table 1 presents the results of a factor analysis of the items in the CSD scale, indicating that the scale measures three components of comparative self-descriptions among family members: power, worth, and attractiveness.

Table 1 about here

Using the CSD scale, a perceived power score is computed for each family member relative to each of five family dyads in which he/she is a role-taker. The perceived power score is the sum of the ratings or raw scores on the adjective pairs having the highest loadings on the power factor: less powerful-more powerful, weaker-stronger, less confident-more confident, and less independent-more independent (see Table 1).[3] If, for example, a son indicates ratings of 4, 2, 5 and 3 respectively on each of these four adjective pairs in comparing himself to his father, then the son's perceived power score in the son-father dyad (where the son is the role-taker) is 14. The range of perceived power scores for any dyad is from four to twenty. The higher the score, the greater the perceived power of the person making the comparison.

Perceived dependency (P-DEP) scale. While the CSD scale measures how powerful a family member perceives himself/herself to be in relation to another family member, it does not directly assess how dependent one family member is on another. Another scale, the Perceived Dependency (P-DEP) scale was developed to measure this latter factor.

The P-DEP scale contains eight items measuring both the emotional and physical dependency of the role-taker on the person whose role he/she is

taking. The three items in the P-DEP scale measuring emotional dependency are derived from a measure of psychological dependency reported by Kastenbaum and Cameron (1969). These items assess how often a family member confides in, seeks the advice of, and seeks the approval of each of five other family members.[4] The remaining five items focus on how physically dependent a family member is on each of five other family members in areas concerning financial assistance, housekeeping help, transportation, health care, and help with maintenance chores or jobs. A factor analysis of these eight items reveals that the emotional and physical dependency items measure distinct factors (see Table 2).

Table 2 about here

For each family member, a physical dependency score is created by summing raw scores across the five items indicative of the physical dependency factor (an item range of one to five and a total sum range of five to twenty-five). A perceived emotional (psychological) dependency score is obtained by summing the raw scores across the three items indicative of the emotional dependency factor (an item range of one to four and a total sum range of three to twelve). Both in the case of physical and emotional dependency, higher scores indicate high dependency.-

FINDINGS

A total of forty-seven, three generational families (282 individuals) were included in the final analysis. Role-taking scores and perceived power scores were computed on every family member for each of the five possible dyads in which he/she was the role-taker. Across the entire sample, then, there was a potential of 1410 role-taking dyads; 30 dyads within each family.

Four scores were computed for each family member as a role-taker in a given dyad: a role-taking accuracy score (R-RAC scale), a perceived power score (CSD scale), a perceived emotional dependency score (P-DEP scale), and a perceived physical dependency score (P-DEP scale). The research hypothesis predicts (a) that role-taking accuracy scores will be negatively correlated with perceived power scores, and (b) that role-taking accuracy scores will be positively correlated with perceived power scores and perceived dependency scores will be negatively correlated and that the two perceived dependency scores will be positively correlated. Table 3 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among these scores for the entire sample (i.e. across all role-taking dyads for all family members).

Table 3 about here

It is readily apparent that the correlations between the scores operationalizing the dependent and independent variables in the research hypothesis are relatively low; the general conclusion being that the research hypothesis is not supported. As low as the correlations are, however, they are in the hypothesized directions. The role-taking accuracy scores are negatively correlated with perceived power scores and positively correlated to both measures of perceived dependency status. Perceived power scores are negatively correlated with perceived dependency measures and emotional dependency scores are positively correlated with perceived physical dependency scores.

Table 4 gives the results of testing the hypothesis at a dyadic level within each of the six family positions. The table presents the frequency with which correlations between role-taking accuracy and measures of the independent variable (perceived power and dependency scores) are in a direction predicted by the hypothesis.[5] An "S" indicates that a given correlation between role-taking accuracy and a particular measure of power or dependency is equal to or greater than $\pm$.10 and is in a direction supporting the research hypothesis. An "0" indicates a similar correlation that is in a direction opposite that predicted by the hypothesis. Asterisks (****) indicate that there is essentially no correlation between role-taking and measures of the independent variable.

Table 4 about here

The figures presented in the right margin of Table 4 represent the number of correlations for each dyad across different operationalization of the independent variable which either support or oppose the hypothesized relationship between role-taking accuracy and power/dependency. The numbers in the lower righthand corner of Table 4 are the total frequencies of supporting and opposing correlations for all family positions across all dyads. Again, there is little evidence in favor of the hypothesis. There are almost as many correlations in a direction opposite that predicted by the hypothesis as there are in a direction supporting the hypothesis.

The data in Table 5 have been extracted from Table 4 and present a more detailed profile of the frequency of supporting and opposing correlations between taking accuracy and perceived power/dependency. Frequencies of

supporting or opposing correlations are broken down by the characteristics of the role-taker, the characteristics of the family member whose role is taken, and by different operationalizations of the independent variable.

Table 5 about here

In comparison to correlations which are in a direction opposite that predicted by the hypothesis, those which support the hypothesized relationship between perceived power/dependency and role-taking accuracy are most likely to be found in situations where (a) the role-taker is female (i.e. female sibling, mother or grandmother) or a father, (b) the sex and age (generation) of the person whose role is being taken is different from that of the role-taker (particularly where the role-taker is female), and (c) where the independent variable is operationalized in terms of perceived emotional dependency. Correlations opposing the research hypothesis are more likely to occur in situations where (a) the role-taker is either a male sibling or a grandfather, (b) the sex and age (generation) of the other whose role is being taken is the same as that of the role-taker, and (c) the independent variable is operationalized in terms of perceived physical dependency.

DISCUSSION

There may be several reasons why the research hypothesis was generally not supported. One of these reasons is derived from the fact that symbolic interaction theory proposes a model of social life in which the "rules of the game" are well-defined, roles are precisely appropriate and neatly articulated, and goals are specific, consciously held, and unanimously accepted.

It was upon the assumption of rational man and highly organized social life that the research hypothism was formulated. But it may be that part of the failure to find support for the hypothesis is because the aforementioned assumptions are not always directly applicable to the family. That is not to say that the family is unorganized or that family members act irrationally. Rather it may be that the family is relatively less organized and family behavior less rational than in other institutions. In these terms, the research hypothesis may have been supported to the extent to which intergenerational family relationships were consonant with the basic assumptions underlying symbolic interaction theory, but failed to the extent that family relationships departed from them.

Another reason why there were few correlations supporting the hypothesis may be that measures of power and dependency are necessary but not sufficient structural conditions for explaining variation in role-taking accuracy. Since resources were limited and since research is often the "art of the possible", many intervening variables were neither measured nor systematically controlled. Two of these variables are (a) the affect or emotional support that the role-taker receives from the other, and (b) the value similarity between the role-taker and the other. The findings by Calonico and Thomas (1972) combined with the data from the study by Thomas, et al. (1972) suggest that persons in low power positions who share similar values with persons of high power, and who have a high positive emotional bond with more powerful people will be accurate role-takers. However, if persons in low power positions do not share similar value orientations with persons in high power positions, but have high positive emotional bonds with them, they will be inaccurate role-takers.

Trends in the data in the current study also point to the importance of value similarity in role-taking accuracy. For example, the finding that support for the hypothesized relationship between role-taking accuracy and power/dependency is most likely to occur where the role-taker and the person whose role is being taken differ on sex and age (generation), but not in cases where they are of the same sex and age (generation), suggests that value similarity may override the influence of differences in power and dependency on role-taking accuracy. Sharing the same social niche defined in terms of sex and age may provide the role-taker and the person whose role is taken with a common universe of discourse or a system of shared meanings which in turn ensures high role-taking accuracy regardless of perceived differences in power position or dependency status. The implication here is that future research on the relationship between perceived power/dependency and role-taking accuracy should take into account the possibility that this relationship is contingent upon the degree of value similarity and/or emotional support between the role-taker and the one whose role is taken.

Finally, the finding that some of the highest correlations between perceived power/dependency and role-taking accuracy are in a direction opposite that predicted by the research hypothesis must be noted. In dyads where the role-taker was either a male adolescent or a grandfather, there was a higher frequency of correlations opposing the hypotheses then there were supporting it. In instances where the role-taker was a male adolescent, perceived power scores on the CSD scale were positively rather than negatively correlated with role-taking accuracy scores. And in the case of perceived physical dependency, the less dependent the male adolescent perceives himself to be on another family member, then the more accurate his was at taking that member's role.

A similar relationship was found between a grandfather's perceived physical dependency and his role-taking accuracy. Why correlations between role-taking accuracy. Why correlations between role-taking accuracy and certain measures of power/dependency should be in a direction opposite that predicted by the hypothesis for adolescents and grandfathers is unclear, although a similar finding (in the case of a made adolescent) has been reported by Thomas, et al. (1972). Perhaps in the case of the male adolescent it is possible that he becomes skillful in role-taking among peers in order to gain their respect and admiration and that these skills are then transfered to family settings and instances where he perceives himself to be in superordinate power positions. The implication here for future that it may be important to determine if there are certain role-taking skills which, when once learned, are transfered to and successfully employed in situations where the role-taker is in a more powerful or less dependent position vis-a-vis those whose roles he takes. It could also be, though, that adolescent males and grandfathers in this study felt threatened in admitting perceived dependency or low power positions within the family and did not respond to the questionnaire in a way that accurately reflected their perceptual field. If this is the case, then different means of measuring perceived power and dependency should be sought.

Table 1

Factor Analysis of Comparative Self-Description (CSD) Scale Items

Item	Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix Two Factor Solution			Principal Factor Loading
	I Power	II Worth	III Attractiveness	
Less Powerful-More Powerful	.79	.13	.11	.69
Weaker-Stronger	.66	.08	.09	.56
Less Confident-More Confident	.64	.18	.08	.61
Less Independent-More Independent	.62	.22	.01	.62
Less Dependable-More Dependable	.17	.76	.02	.62
Less Helpful-More Helpful	.19	.67	.04	.57
Less Honest-More Honest	.14	.62	.07	.51
Worse-Better	.19	.57	.19	.52
Less Attractive-More Attractive	.05	.08	.68	.12
Less Wise-More Wise	.54	.46	.23	.70
Less Intelligent-More Intelligent	.52	.21	.13	.55
Percent Total Variance	32.6	9.8	5.4	

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Perceived Dependency (P-DEP) Scale Items

Item	Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix Two Factor Solution		Principal Factor Loading
	I Physical Dependence	II Emotional Dependence	
Role-taker dependent on Other for:			
Health Care	.83	.30	.82
Transportation	.76	.20	.70
Money	.74	.20	.69
Physical Help With Chores	.58	.42	.72
Housekeeping	.52	.38	.64
Role-taker SEEKS ADVICE of Other	.42	.77	.83
Role-taker SEEKS APPROVAL of Other	.32	.74	.73
Role-taker CONFIDES in Other	.26	.73	.68
Role-taker IDENTIFIES with Other	.34	.24	.34
Percent Total Variance	48.5	8.5	

Table 3

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients Among Operationalizations of Independent and Dependent Variables

	Perceived Power (CSD Scale)	Perceived Emotional Dependency (P-DEP Scale)	Perceived Physical Dependency (P-DEP Scale)
Role-Taking Accuracy (R-RAC Scale)	-.0608 (1389) s=.012	+.0961 (1392) s=.001	+.0316 (1394) s=.119
Perceived Power	———	-.1811 (1393) s=.001	-.1330 (1399) s=.001
Perceived Emotional Dependency	———	———	+.6394 (1403) s=.001

Key: Correlation Coefficient
(number of cases)
s = level of significance

Table 4

Frequency of Correlation Coefficients Supporting or Opposing the Research Hypothesis Broken Down by Operationalization of Independent Variable and by Family Dyad

FAMILY DYAD:			OPERATIONALIZATION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:			FREQUENCY OF CORRELATIONS:	
ROLE-TAKER	Other	(N)	Perceived Power	Perceived Emotional Dependency	Perceived Physical Dependency	Supporting Hypothesis (S)	Opposing Hypothesis (O)
MALE SIBLING	Male Sibling	(19)	+.46 (O)	****	-.45 (O)	0	2
	Female Sibling	(20)	+.54 (O)	-.12 (O)	****	0	2
	Father	(42)	+.14 (O)	****	****	0	1
	Mother	(42)	**** (O)	+.15 (S)	****	1	0
	Grandfather	(42)	+.25 (O)	****	-.18 (O)	0	2
	Grandmother	(42)	****	****	-.15 (O)	0	1
FEMALE SIBLING	Male Sibling	(22)	-.22 (S)	-.44 (O)	****	1	1
	Female Sibling	(30)	****	-.10 (O)	****	0	1
	Father	(52)	-.26 (S)	****	+.28 (S)	2	0
	Mother	(52)	****	****	-.15 (O)	0	1
	Grandfather	(51)	****	+.27 (S)	****	1	0
	Grandmother	(52)	****	+.37 (S)	+.16 (S)	2	0
FATHER	Son	(41)	****	****	+.11 (S)	1	0
	Daughter	(51)	****	+.17 (S)	****	1	0
	Wife	(46)	-.22 (S)	+.28 (S)	+.22 (S)	3	0
	Father/-in-Law	(47)	-.11 (S)	+.14 (S)	****	2	0
	Mother/-in-Law	(47)	+.22 (O)	-.14 (O)	-.27 (O)	0	3
MOTHER	Son	(41)	****	****	+.11 (S)	1	0
	Daughter	(51)	+.11 (O)	****	****	0	1
	Husband	(47)	****	+.11 (S)	****	1	0
	Father/-in-Law	(46)	+.15 (O)	+.17 (S)	****	1	1
	Mother/-in-Law	(46)	****	****	+.22 (S)	1	0
GRANDFATHER	Grandson	(42)	****	-.32 (O)	-.35 (O)	0	2
	Granddaughter	(52)	-.33 (S)	****	-.28 (O)	1	1
	Son/-in-Law	(47)	****	+.11 (S)	-.12 (O)	1	1
	Daughter/-in-Law	(46)	-.28 (S)	+.11 (S)	-.11 (O)	2	1
	Wife	(46)	****	****	-.21 (O)	0	1
GRANDMOTHER	Grandson	(42)	-.30 (S)	****	****	1	0
	Granddaughter	(52)	****	****	****	0	0
	Son/-in-Law	(47)	****	****	****	0	0
	Daughter/-in-Law	(47)	-.19 (S)	+.18 (S)	****	2	0
	Husband	(45)	+.27 (O)	+.12 (S)	****	1	1
Frequency of Correlations Supporting or Opposing Hypothesis for ALL FAMILY POSITIONS Across All Family Dyads:						26	24

KEY: **** = Correlations less than $\pm$.10
(S) = Correlations greater than $\pm$.10 which are in the direction predicted by hypothesis
(O) = Correlations greater than $\pm$.10 which are in a direction opposite that predicted by hypothesis

Table 5

Frequency of Correlations Supporting and Opposing Research Hypothesis Broken Down By Characteristics of Role-taker, Characteristics of Person Whose Role is Taken, and Different Operationalizations of the Independent Variable

	FREQUENCY OF CORRELATIONS	
	Supporting Hypothesis	Opposing Hypothesis
I. CHARACTERISTICS OF ROLE-TAKER		
Sex of role-taker		
Male	12	17
Female	14	6
Family position of role-taker		
Male sibling	1	8
Female sibling	6	3
Father	7	3
Mother	4	2
Grandfather	4	6
Grandmother	4	1
Generation of role-taker		
Younger (child)	7	11
Middle (parent)	11	5
Older (Grandparent)	8	6
II. CHARACTERISTICS OF OTHER WHOSE ROLE IS TAKEN		
Sex of Other		
Same as role-taker	9	10
Male	3	7
Female	5	13
Opposite that of role-taker	17	11
Male (female-male dyad)	9	2
Female (male-female dyad)	8	9
Generation of Other		
Same as role-taker	6	7
Younger generation	1	5
Middle generation	4	0
Older generation	1	2
Opposite that of role-taker	20	15
Younger-Middle dyad	3	2
Younger-Older dyad	3	3
Middle-Younger dyad	3	1
Middle-Older dyad	4	4
Older-Younger dyad	2	3
Older-Middle dyad	5	2
III. OPERATIONALIZATION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLE		
Perceived power	8	8
Perceived emotional dependency	12	5
Perceived physical dependency	6	10

FOOTNOTES

[1] If the independent variable is measured in terms of perceived dependency, then the research hypothesis may be re-stated such that the perceived dependency status of Person in relation to Other will be directly related to Person's ability to accurately take Other's role.

[2] Thomas, et al. (1974) used Osgood's (1962, 1964) semantic differential technique to assess a person's description of himself as he "ordinarily" sees himself. The scale employed twelve bipolar pairs of adjectives, each set on a five point Likert-scale. These twelve adjective pairs were factor analyzed by varimax rotation and two factors emerged: power and worth. Five adjective pairs were indicative of the power factor and included powerful-powerless, clever-stupid, attractive-unattractive, confident-unsure, and intelligent-unintelligent. Three adjective pairs were indicative of worth: honest-dishonest, good-bad, and dependable-undependable. It was felt that if a person's description of himself compared to a particular other in a dyadic relationship, then the five adjective pairs indicative of power in the self-esteem scale would be both valid and reliable measures of the role-taker's perceived power relative to the other in a family dyad and could be used to construct the CSD scale. The three adjective pairs indicative of a worth factor were also included in the CSD scale. However, before employing these eight pairs in the development of CSD scale, two modifications were made. First, the format was changed to make each adjective pair more conducive to dyadic comparative descriptions (e.g. powerful-powerless was changed to less powerful-more powerful). Second, two items were reworded (clever-foolish was changed to less wise-more wise, and good-bad was changed to better-worse). To these eight pairs were added an additional three adjective pairs: Less independent-more independent, weaker-stronger, and less helpful-more helpful. The first two were felt to be indicative of a power dimension and the latter indicative of a worth dimension.

[3] In creating perceived power scores, there is the option of either standardizing the raw score (i.e. obtaining a "z" score) on each of the four pairs of adjectives indicative of the power factor and weighting it by the factor score coefficient of that pair, or just summing the raw scores or ratings of the adjective pairs loading highest on the power factor. The latter option was selected since the principal axis factor loadings were nearly the same for all four adjective pairs (see Table 1).

[4] A fourth item, the extent to which a family member identifies with another, was also included in the measure of emotional dependency. In the final analysis, however, it was not included in the computation of the perceived emotional dependency score since it did not load discriminantly on the emotional dependency factor (see Table 2).

[5] Comparing the frequency with which correlations between the independent and dependent variables either support or oppose the hypothesized relationship between them is admittedly not a rigorous test of the hypothesis. Nevertheless, when multiple tests of an hypothesis are used -- such as is the case here -- traditional levels of significance become less useful since the various tests are not strictly independent. In such cases, a strategy of looking for patterns and trends in the data may be adopted. See Stryker (1968) and Thomas and Weigert (1972) for examples of research where patterns of support and nonsupport of research hypotheses have been used.

REFERENCES

Blenkner, M. Social work and family relationships in later life with some thoughts on filial maturity. In E. Shanas and G. Strieb (Eds.), Social structure and the family: Generation relations, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965, 46-59.

Brim, O. G., Jr., Family structure and sex role learning by children. Sociometry, 1958, 21, 1-16.

Calonico, J. M. & Thomas, D. L. Role-taking as a function of value similarity and affect in the nuclear family. Unpublished Paper, Washington State University, 1972.

Dymond, R. F. A scale for the measurement of empathic ability. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1949, 13, 127-133.

Emerson, R. M. Power-dependence relations. American Sociological Review, 1962, 27 (1), 31-41.

Ferreira, A. Interpersonal perceptivity among family members. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1964, 34, 64-70.

Flavell, J. H., Botkin, P. T., Fry, C. L., Jr., Wright, J. W., & Jarvis, P. E. The development of role-taking and communication skills in children. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968.

French, J. R. P. & Raven, B. The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), Studies in social power. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, 1959.

Garfinkel, H. Studies of the routine grounds of everyday activities. Social Problems, 1964, 11, 225-250.

Hill, R., Foote, N., Aldous, J., Carlson, R., & MacDonald, R. Family development in three generations: A longitudinal study of changing family patterns of planning and achievement. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., Inc., 1970.

Hogan, R. Development of an empathy scale. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1969, 33, 307-316.

Icheiser, G. Misunderstanding in human relations. American Journal of Sociology, 1949, 55, 1-70.

Kastenbaum, R., & Cameron, P. Cognitive and emotional dependency in later life. In R. A. Kalish (Ed.), The dependencies of old people. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute of Gerontology, The University of Michigan-Wayne State University, 1969, 39-57.

Laing, R. D., Phillipson, H., & Lee, A. R. Interpersonal perception: A theory and a method of research. New York: Springer, 1966.

Litwak, E. Extended kin relations in an industrial democratic society. In E. Shanas and G. Strieb (Eds.), Social structure and the family: Generation relations, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965, 290-323.

Mead, G. H. Mind, self, and society. Edited with introduction by Charles W. Morris, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Osgood, C. E. Studies of the generality of affective meaning. American Psychologist, 1962, 17, 10-28.

Osgood, C. E. Semantic Differential technique in comparative study of cultures. American Anthropologist, 1964, 66, 171-200.

Rose, J. D. The role of the other in self-evaluation. The Sociological Quarterly, 1969, 10 (Fall), 470-479.

Scott, F. G. Family group structure and patterns of social interaction. American Journal of Sociology, 1962, 68, 214-228.

Scott, F. G. The urban three-generation family role structure and interaction process. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1960.

Secord, P. F., & Backman, C. W. Social Psychology. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Shibutani, T. Society and personality. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1961.

Smith, T. E. Foundations of parental influence upon adolescents: An application of social power theory. American Sociological Review, 1970, 35 (5), 860-873.

Stark, S. Gemeinschaft, inner creation, and role-taking: III. Charles Horton Cooley on "Social" vs "Spatial" knowledge. Psychological Reports, 1970, 26, 183-210.

Stotland, E. & Dunn, R. E. Empathy, self-esteem and birth order. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1963, 66, 532-540.

Stotland, E. & Walsh, J. A. Birth order and an experimental study of empathy. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1963, 66, 610-614.

Stryker, S. Relationships of married offspring and parent: A test of Mead's theory. In J. Heiss (Ed.), Family roles and interaction. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1968, 444-460.

Sussman, M. B. Relationships of adult children with their parents in the United States. In E. Shanas and G. Strieb (Eds.), Social structure and the family: Generation relations, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965, 62-92.

Sussman, M. B., & Burchinal, L. Parental aid to married children: Implications for family functioning. Marriage and Family Living, 1962, 24, 320-332.

Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. The social psychology of groups. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959.

Thomas, D. L., Franks, D. D., & Calonico, J. M. Role-taking and power in social psychology. American Sociological Review, 1972, 37 (5), 605-614.

Thomas, D. L., Gecas, V., Weigert, A. W., Rooney, E. Family socialization and the adolescent: Determinants of self-concept, conformity, religiosity, and counter cultural values. Lexington, Mass.: Lesington Books, 1974.

Thomas, D. L. & Weigert, A. J. Determining nonequivalent measurement in cross-cultural family research. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1972, 166-177.

Thomas, D. L., & Weigert, A. J. The problem of fit between form and content. Social Science Information, 1973.